

Topics Covered: Part One; General; RFS General; Part Two, Section One; Part Two, Section Two; and Allocations

June 16, 2003

Part One

1. Question: What is the State's vision for W-2? What will the program look like in 5 years?

Answer: It is difficult to predict what the program will look like in 5 years. The current RFP maintains a focus on employment and self-sufficiency for W-2. It proposes a program that is much reduced in funding and administration. As a result, the state is encouraging consortiums and supporting the Wisconsin Job Center Network as an effective service delivery system for W-2 and Related Programs through co-location and integration of staff and services. Planning and coordination of services with the County Social/Human Services agencies, Workforce Development Boards and agencies in the Job Centers is also emphasized.

The vision is stated in the RFP and in the RFS Re-contracting Instructions (Administrator's Memo #03-10), in the section titled W-2 philosophy.

2. Question: Workforce Development Boards are discouraged from providing services, but some have been granted a waiver to provide services. The TANF Requests for Proposals states that a Workforce Development Board must contract for services. Can a Workforce Development Board also request a waiver to provide W-2 services?

Answer: No, We do not want to have Workforce Development Boards providing direct services under W-2 and Related Programs. Instead, we want to encourage and foster the Workforce Development Boards in their role of area workforce planning, policy and oversight.

3. Question: What ideas does the state have to create cost efficiencies? Is the State prepared to give some leadership on how to provide the required services with significant admin cost reductions?

Answer: The encouragement of consortiums is one effort the state is pursuing to reduce administrative costs.

4. Question: If a W-2 agency elects to not enter into a contract, what is the last date they have to notify DWD?

Answer: If the W-2 agency has the Right of First Selection (RFS), the last date to notify DWD is August 8, 2003, by which date a Letter of Intent to Recontract or Relinquish is due to DWD. DWD may issue a second RFP on or about August 11, 2003 to solicit proposals for areas without a W-2 agency for 2004-2005.

If the agency is not an RFS agency, then DWD will know of the decision when the agency fails to submit an RFP for the W-2 program by June 27, 2003.

5. Question: How will the Department handle an area where no one has bid to operate the W-2 program?

Answer: The Department will make every effort to find a suitable provider with which to contract. If no acceptable proposal is received for a geographic area the Department reserves the right to contract with any contractor selected under this RFP process. However, Wisconsin Statute 49.143(1)(b) states that if no acceptable provider is found in a geographic area, the Department must administer the program in that area. The Department could do this through its own field offices. Additionally, the Department reserves the right to issue a second RFP.

6. Question: It was stated at the May 28 proposer's conference that a second, truncated RFP will be issued in geographic areas where a Right of First Selection agency relinquishes Right of First Selection. However, in section 5.5 of part one of the RFP, DWD states that, in areas where the Right of First Selection agency relinquishes Right of First Selection, DWD may contract with any proposer successful in the previous round of the competitive process. Nowhere does the RFP confirm the verbal statement at the proposer's conference. Please confirm, in writing the statement made at the proposer's conference.

Answer: The intent of the schedule is to be able to issue the Notices of Intent to Contract on August 4, 2003. There are clauses in the RFP that give the Department alternative options if there are still open areas. The Department has built into its own planning the potential for another RFP, if needed.

7. Question: Aside from the RFP does the state have the ability to break apart a consortium proposal. For example, if a proposal was made for three geographic areas, would the state possibly remove one area, resulting in an award for a consortium of two areas and an award for one single area?
- Answer: It is not the intent of the state to break up a consortium proposal. However, it is difficult to foresee all of the possible scenarios that might require a resolution by the Department.
8. Question: Part One, 4.5.3.1 states that every page of the proposal needs to have the proposer's name on it and a page number. Does this include the forms provided by DWD? Can we modify those forms to add the proposer's name and a page number?
- Answer: Although there is a place for the agency's name on each form, you may modify the form to add the proposer's name (in a different location) a page number.
9. Question: Part One, 5.2: How will consortium applications be scored? What if you have 3 organizations competing for County A – competitor 1 proposes only to work in County A, while competitor 2 proposes County A in a consortium with Counties B and C, and competitor 3 proposes County A in a consortium with Counties C and D.
- Answer: Each consortium proposal is eligible for 100 points. A proposal for a single geographic area will not receive the 100 points. All proposals will be scored as stated in RFP Part One, Section 5.
10. Question: Part One, 5.5, will corrective action plans count against the agencies that have them?
- Answer: A W-2 agency that is or has been under a Corrective Action Plan will have its Corrective Action Plan reviewed as part of the RFP; there are not points to count against the W-2 agency.
11. Question: What is considered a bona fide consortium? Is it possible for proposers who are applying as a consortium to get partial credit for 1.1 if the department determines their consortium proposal is not bona fide?
- Answer: A bona fide consortium is one that meets the RFP definition of a consortium. There is not partial credit for a non-bona fide consortium.

12. Question: How will incentive funds for new consortiums be determined? Should proposers include a plan for using such incentive funds in their proposal or will that count against them in the cost proposal?

Answer: The Department will issue additional information on the consortium incentive funding. A proposer may submit a plan for its intended use of consortium funding, if it so wishes. Only items required in the RFP will be scored.

13. Question: Section 1.26 is worth approximately 37.5 points. Agencies that are currently the W-2 provider in that area are not required to answer this question. Will they automatically get the 37.5 points?

Answer: An agency that is not required to answer Response Item 1.26 will not be adversely impacted.

General

14. Question: Do RFS agencies need to submit a Request to Remain on the Mailing list?

Answer: No. Check frequently the RFS website (<http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/dws/w2/rfs/default.htm>) for updated information.

15. Question: The focus is on the Workforce Development Areas (WDAs) which are structured differently than the Regional Offices. Are there plans at DWD to restructure to have identical Regional Office and WDAs?

Answer: There are only seven Regions and eleven WDAs. Some of the regions encompass more than one WDA but no WDA is split between more than one Region. So in essence, there is an alignment of the boundaries now. There are no plans to increase the number of Regions to eleven.

16. Question: Is DWD considering a change in contract management and monitoring duties (e.g. Department's Contract Manager)?

Answer: Not at this time. However, we cannot preclude making changes to our own organizational structure and work methods to accommodate reductions in resources at a future date.

17. Question: Would DWD suspend the Administrative Rule on training requirements, in light of the expense related to this training?
- Answer: No, DWD is not considering suspending the training requirements, as provided in DWD Administrative Rule #17. Suspending the training requirement is inconsistent with the Department's philosophy.
18. Question: What are the greatest concerns about the cuts that we will have to make in the program services?
- Answer: We hope that we are selecting agencies with administration and management capacities to make the best decisions for their programs and the eligible population, and that they are exploring every avenue of coordination with other agencies and fund sources in behalf of their participants.
19. Question: Are there any special requirements for faith-based organizations?
- Answer: Faith-based organizations may provide W-2 and Related Programs on the same basis as any other private organization, as a W-2 agency or as a subcontractor does.
20. Question: Please expand on the financial risk there is to a county or private agency operating the W-2 program.
- Answer: A W-2 agency may terminate its Contract, without cause at the end of the month following a one hundred and twenty calendar day written notice. The Department will work with any agency that selects this option. The W-2 agency is responsible for the Contract provisions through the date of its termination.
21. Question: How am I able to dispute/appeal specific caseload information?
- Answer: There is not a "dispute resolution"/appeal process, as this is a request for proposals. The allocations are presented to assist agencies in determining their capacity for delivering services, but are not meant to be representative of the final Contract allocations.

RFS General

22. Question: Please list all items that RFS agencies do NOT need to complete and that current W-2 agencies do not need to submit as part of the RFP if they did not earn RFS.

Answer: A Right of First Selection agency does not need to submit the following: audit report and the References, Affidavit of Fair Competition, and Designation of Confidential and Proprietary Information forms.

A current W-2 agency without the right of first selection must submit the complete RFP with the exception of attaching audit reports.

23. Question: Will RFS agencies be scored on a point system to determine if they have an acceptable plan?

Answer: Scoring of the plan for an RFS agency will be pass/fail with the Department discussing changes it would need to see in the agency plan.

24. Question: In the competitive RFP process, proposers are given an opportunity to establish deviations from and exceptions to the RFP and Contract terms and conditions. However, this same opportunity is not available for RFS agencies. How does a RFS agency go about including deviations and exceptions in a RFS (recontracting) plan?

Answer: Although, it is not specifically stated in the re-contracting instructions, you may submit a request for a deviation or exception. Submit your request for a deviation or exception by describing your request fully, on your agency letterhead, signing the request and attaching it to your W-2 Plan.

Part Two: Section One

25. Question: If you are looking for the “best” administrative agency that can handle funding, why isn’t funding part of the Right of First Selection (RFS) in the current contract. W-2 is all about services.

Answer: RFS agencies are required to complete 1.16 and 1.19 of Capacity Plan. The Performance Standards also address financial management. W-2 is all about services, which means we do need agencies with a good capacity to administer and manage the program with successful outcomes. They do have to manage the funding available.

26. Question: If our current sub-contractors will not be used in the 2004-2005 contract year, can they be used as references for the RFP?
- Answer: Yes. However if there were a chance that you might subcontract with them in the future, it would not appear to be an unbiased reference. Similarly if other parts of your organization will still be subcontracting with the party or organization, the reference might be self-serving.
27. Question: May we use our agency's Board member(s) as a reference?
- Answer: No. Such a reference is a part of your organization.
28. Question: Is a current W-2 agency required to submit any of the items listed in Part Two, Section 1.16, h)?
- Answer: No, the items listed in the above section are a part of the audit report.
29. Question: What is required of an existing W-2 agency for Response Item 1.18, Information System Technical Requirements?
- Answer: All proposals must have a fully completed response to this section, whether it is a response that is brought forward from its current plan and a statement that there are no changes, or its current response brought forward and a statement describing significant changes or a completely new answer. Evaluators will be reading the proposal, as written and will need to read the agency's plan
30. Question: If a proposer is not applying in a consortium, do they get zero points in Section 1.1, making the total possible points they can achieve 900?
- Answer: Yes.
31. Question: Questions 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, and 1.5 are all extremely similar and inter-related. Do you have any suggestions on how to respond to each without being verbosely redundant and repetitive?
- Answer: 1.2 is an executive summary of the entire plan - capacity and program. Please keep it at a high level and no more than five pages.
- 1.3 is a description of your organization as a whole (beyond the W-2 and related programs).
- 1.4 is agency experience in providing similar programs and services – either W-2 experience or other employment and training program experience.

1.5 is the agency's process for planning W-2 and related programs internally with staff, externally with other agencies and how the Plan is communicated to interested parties.

32. Question: Part Two, 1.7: Will agencies that do not currently have a facility in the county they are applying for automatically receive fewer points than an agency that is already located there?

Answer: It is not required to currently have a facility in the area for which one is proposing. In order to earn points for the integrated services the proposal must demonstrate service integration and the ability to develop an integrated service system.

Part Two: Section Two

33. Question: Please explain what "regional child support publications" are, as used in RFP, Part Two, Section 2.5.11.

Answer: Regional was not intended to mean specific materials – only those pertinent to your area.

34. Question: Is there an error in the numbering in Part Two Section Two, Response Item, 2.5.12, Emergency Assistance? The letters are d), e) and f).

Answer: Yes, the letters are incorrect. The correct letters are a), b), and c).

Allocations

35. Question: Please explain why some of the caseload numbers are very different in the allocation chart compared to other Department reports, such as EOS. I am especially concerned about the FSET count.

Answer: There are several differences in the methodology of different reports for getting the counts of FSET participants.

- R&S Web page gets its numbers from the EOS report called CARES-WP090C-MON. These numbers are end-of-the month numbers. Any participant that left before the end of the month is not counted in this report.
- The EOS report CARES-RP800A-RPD C720 counts exceptions, which are people in referred, scheduled or enrolled status. The exceptions are situations that should not occur for FSET participants, but have occurred. It does not show just enrolled FSET individuals.

- For the purposes of Appendix A of the RFP we wanted to use unique populations without overlap of counts so we choose FS only. We also wanted to cross match the methodology of during the month counts to compare with the W-2 counts. This means we took anyone in an activity in the report month and counted him or her once. The FSET total count of individuals were then multiplied times the weight. This final number will not match any other report. The numbers are the only counts that produce an FSET only, during the month count by agency.

36. Question: Will the Milwaukee W-2 allocations be adjusted to reflect the fact that Milwaukee County will determine the child care eligibility?

Answer: No, there is not a plan to adjust the Milwaukee allocations for this purpose.

37. Question: Please explain the following aspects of the W-2 funding methodology and the specific weight given to each type of case.

Answer: W-2 cases, Cash and non cash, were given a weight of one; FSET cases were given a weight of 0.81818; and Child Care cases were given a weight of 0.2045

38. Question: Please explain how caseloads were “projected”, if an average was used in the projection, and the phrase “applying the percentage change in caseload to date against caseload data”.

Answer: In determining caseloads to which to apply the weighting, we looked at the contract-to-date percentage change through March 2003. This gave us a projected caseload for the following month, which is what was used in the weighting the caseload. In cases where the percentage change produced a projected negative number, we used the contract- to-date average caseload instead.

39. Question: What benefit amount was used to calculate the five-case minimum benefit amount?

Answer: No benefit amount was used to calculate the five-case minimum. Instead, this minimum applies to the number of cases used for the overall weighted caseload used.

40. Question: Does the benefit allocation include sanction dollars?

Answer: Individual area allocations do not include assumptions about sanction amounts. Instead, the total allocation that is distributed already includes the assumed sanction level statewide.

41. Question: When will final allocations be issued?
- Answer: Final allocations will be issued after the Governor has signed the Biennial Budget and prior to the 2004-05 Contracts being issued.
42. Question: May unspent 2002-2003 W-2 Contract funds be carried over to the 2004-2005 W-2 Contract?
- Answer: It is unlikely that unused 2002-2003 W-2 Contract funds will be able to be carried over to the 2004-2005 W-2 Contract.
43. Question: Although allocations have been substantially reduced (cut in half), there appear to be no parallel reductions in administrative monitoring or reporting requirements or services. How does the Department propose to rectify this situation?
- Answer: The program requirements for W-2 and Related Programs cannot be waived. Instead agencies are going to have to look seriously at how work is accomplished and make decisions accordingly. We are looking for agencies with the administrative and management capacity to make good decisions when faced with these difficult decisions.